7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

Evergreen oaks, which are tolerant of greater aridity, persist,—although at wider intervals than in true maquis—but tall shrubs are much less common, and a few scrub of dwarf bushes and thorns take their place. Because of the more open nature of this vegetation, which rarely exceeds 3 feet in height, perennial plants can develop, and for some weeks after the spring rains, a carpet of flowers and herbs makes a striking display. Garrigue is often discontinuous, with bare patches of soil and rock interspersed with plants. (Fisher, 1950, p. 71.)

Mammalian fauna are very sparse indeed; as a matter of fact, as far as the writer knows there is virtually none. Snakes, however, are fairly numerous, are all regarded as being poisonous, and are killed on sight. Small lizards, spiders, six-inch centipedes, snails, scorpions, and large, wood-eating beetles are prominent among the other creatures which were observed. Birds are few, probably because those which venture into the district are generally shot, even if they are as small as sparrows. Flies are numerous, and there are some mosquitoes.

THE DISTRICT OF AL-QURNI

Now that its physical characteristics have been described, the question arises, On what basis can al-Qurni be considered to be a distinct district? The name, according to several informants, means "corner," and it is the impression of the writer that it is used primarily only by the inhabitants of the district itself. True, in terms of terrain, it has two features which set it apart from the land immediately surrounding it. It rises particularly sharply and suddenly from the sea; and from the south, say from the hamlet of el-Burj, the ridge upon which Rihanni and Jibbayil are built looms up definitely higher than the nearer land, from which it is separated by an arroyo, the Wadi Ba'ishta. These distinctions are, however, rather minor, and, as far as is known, the people themselves do not perceive them. Within al-Qurni there is little of a physical nature to account for its being set apart as a unit. The land is sharply rolling, and the terrain consists essentially of three ridges which run roughly at right angles to the shore line. Upon the largest and highest of these, the three northern villages are built. Shaykhan and Mumjil are on the second, middle one; and the third has been commented upon above. Such features are typical of most of the coastal zone from Juni to Tripoli.

Al-Qurni is not a political entity. It is simply a locality in Kisrawan, one of several districts in the Province of Mount Lebanon which is one of the five provinces into which the Republic is divided. Al-Qurni does contain six political units, each with its elected mayor and council, as well as its own church. These are the villages of Burbara, Ghazzoun, Shaykhan, Mumjil, Jibbayil, and Rihanni. Lower Burbara is merely an adjunct of the village proper. For political purposes, Bukh'az is part of Ghazzoun. Hilwi and 'Arqbi belong to Mumjil. Ba'ishta is part of Rihanni. For other than political purposes, the people consider themselves to be seven, rather than six, villages, separating Bukh'az from Ghazzoun. Of the seven,

7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

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Most of the territory of the village is divided into a large number of sections each of which has its own name. The map (Fig. 4) indicates the sections—*Hayy* (حي)—in the village proper. Most of these names are evidently very old, and those in the village proper were translated as follows: "fig place," "lowland" (i.e., the *wadi* which abuts it to the north), "infertile" (mostly bare rock), "surrounded" (connotation obscure), "lemon place" (no citrus plants are grown in the village), "little head" (a secondary crest, see Fig. 4, Sec. 55), "graves," "center of town" (*safa*), "small green fertile place," "place of small olive press" (no longer so), and "priest's shrine" (obscure). Translations could not be obtained for a few others. Just outside the village proper there are two sections of whose names no one could even guess the meaning. They are probably not of Arabic origin. No particular name is given to some sections of the village proper, especially in the central portion. The word *safa* has been applied to part of this central portion for at least fifty years but apparently not much earlier than that. This suggests that the present concentration of commercial establishments (see map, Fig. 3) is relatively recent, for in general *safa* means the part of a village where the stores are located.

Those portions within the settlement which do not have specific names are generally referred to as *jinan*, which means the deep fertile soil which is usually devoted to the growing of vegetables. This is a generic term for this particular soil-type. Others in use in the village are *sahl* (plain—land without trees), *salikh* (land with trees), and *malk* (orchards). Of these, the last is of particular interest.

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Malk really means "land held in fee simple." In Mumjil, nearly all the land is held in fee simple, and orchards are the most valuable property. *Sahl* is incorporated into some of the section names, but *salikh* and *malk* are not, as far as could be determined.

On either side of the road leading to Hilwi (the old path which it superseded was called *tariq al-maalika*—"road to the brackish spring"), there are eight named sections. Similarly, along the path which leads to Hilwi via Mar Mamma (*tariq al-Hilwi*—"road to the fresh-water spring"), there are twelve. In all, then, thirty-four named sections were recorded, and there are unquestionably a good many more. The names, in general, refer to physical characteristics of the land in question or to past owners or associated events; or their meaning is obscure or unknown. As far as could be determined, the named sections have no social significance except that they make it possible to specify exactly different parts of the village. This is very helpful in a situation where the individual's landholdings are usually widely scattered.

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The map (Fig. 4) also indicates the division of the village into two halves: *har fawqani*, "the upper part," and *har tahtani*, "the lower part." This division *does*, or at least did, have social significance. It was stated that up to about eighty years ago, the upper part was completely dominated by Maximal Lineage A, the lower part by Maximal Lineage C. (Further discussion of this matter must wait